of them was held to be of a mild nature. Out of the 7 held substantially blameworthy, petitions of 2 of them have been received. These 2 petitions are under examination.

Agitation by Coast Guard Personnel of Fifth Pay Commission Recommendations

4. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether the Coast Guard Personnel have been agitating for removal of certain disparities and anomalies in their pay and allowances arising from decisions taken on the Fifth Pay Commission recommendations relating to them;

(b)if so, the details of the disparities and anomalies; and

(c)the steps taken to resolve the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) There have been representations from the Coast Guard personnel about their discontentment over the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission and the decisions taken thereon.

(b) and (c) The pay scales of Coast Guard (CG) personnel broadly correspond to the pay scales for personnel in the Central Police Organisations (CPOs) such as BSF. Whereas Coast Guard personnel have been provided the replacement scales as recommended by the Fifth Pay Commission, the pay scales of personnel of CPOs were further rationalised with effect from 10.10.97, over and above the Fifth Pay Commission awards. The implication of the aforesaid revision is under examination and a final view will be taken in consultation with the Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure).

Seizure of Ships with Arms and Ammunition

5. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether it is a fact that the ~)oast Guards of Indian Navy have seized ships containing arms and ammunition in the sea near Andaman and Nicobar Islands recently,

(b)if so, the details of the action taken by Government; and

(c)if the action has not been completed so far, by when it would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) In a combined Services operation conducted by the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Coast Guard in the Andaman l Nicobar Islands on the 10/11 February, 1998, 73 gunrunners, two gun boats and two trawlers containing arms and ammunition were captured.

(b) and (c) The Central Bureau of Investigation has been entrusted with the responsibility of investigation of the case which is subjudice.

Spying on Indian War-ships

6. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government are aware of the spying on Indian war-ships by Australian surveillance aircrafts;

(b)if so, since when the spying is going on;

(c)whether Government have lodged any protest to Australian Government on the matter; and

(d)if so, reaction of the Australian Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Five incidents of surveillance of Indian warships by Australian

Surveillance aircraft during the period from July 1993 to November 1997 have been reported.

(c)All the five incidents were taken up with the Australian Government and suitable protest lodged against Australia's unfriendly and provocative acts.

(d)The reaction of the Australian Government is that surveillance at high seas did not constitute any violation of norms and the Australian tactics are not different from those adopted by other armed forces in the region.

रक्षा मंत्री द्वारा गया बयान

7. **श्री शिवचरण सिंह** :

श्री गोविन्दराम मिरी :

क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान दिनांक 8 मई, 1998 को "दि हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स" के नई दिल्ली संस्करण में "मिनिस्टर्स स्टेटमेंट्स डोन्ट मैटर" नामक शीर्षक से प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर आकर्षित किया गया है; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस संबध में सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री जार्ज फर्नान्डीज) : (क) जी, हां।

(ख) एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

सरकार ने गुवाहटी से 7 मई, 1998 को प्रकाशित उस समाचार रिपोर्ट का अवलोकन किया है जो जनरल मालिकः मंत्री के वकतव्य का कोई औचित्य नहीं है, नामक शीर्षक के अन्तर्गत छपा है और जिसे आज (8 मई, 1998) के "हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स" के प्रथम पृष्ठ पर प्रकाशित किया गया है। इस समाचार में सेना अध्यक्ष को यह टिप्पणी उद्दघृत की गई हैं कि कुछ विशिष्ट मामलों पर रक्षा मंत्री द्वारा व्यक्त विचार तथा अन्य कथित टिप्पणियां असंगत है।

सही स्थिति यह है कि 7 मई, 1998 को सेनाध्यक्ष ने असम में उदलगुड़ी स्थिति चिकित्सा शिविर का उदघाटन किया था। इस शिविर का आयोजन मुख्यालय, 4 कोर ने किया था और इस अवसर पर कुछ संवाददाता (मुख्यतः स्थानीय) मौजूद थे। इस अवसर के पश्चात प्रैस के साथ संक्षिप्त बातचीत के दौरान चीन के संबंध में रक्षा मंत्री की स्थिति टिप्पणी पर सेनाध्यक्ष की प्रतिक्रिया चाही गई थी। सेनाध्यक्ष ने स्पष्ट रुप से इस विषय पर कोई टिप्पणी करने या इस संबंध में चर्चा करने से मना कर दिया था। इस घटना को स्थानीय समाचर पत्रों और 8 मई, 1998 के हिन्दु में व्यापक रुप से प्रचारित किया गया। महत्वपूर्ण बात यह है कि इस मामले पर हिन्दुस्तान टाइम्स के समाचार की किसी अन्य समाचार पत्र ने पुष्टि नहीं की।

अतः यह स्पष्ट है कि उक्त रिपोर्ट में कोई सच्चाई नहीं है।

यह मालूम हुआ है कि इस अखबार का कोई भी पत्रकार चिकित्सा शिविर के दौरान उपस्थित नहीं था।

Strategic Review

8. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether it is a fact that Government are taking up a strategic review;

(b)if so, the details thereof, with a tentative time frame for the commissioning and conclusion of such a review; and

(c)whether or not his statements on China would prejudice the process of review?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government is committed to undertaking a strategic defence review by the National Security Council that will be established on the basis of the recommendations of the Task Force established for this purpose.

(c) No, Sir. The statements on China will not prejudice the process of review.